



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## **Riverside Unanimously Adopts Landmark Food and Beverage Rules to Address Obesity, Diabetes and Chronic Disease**

*City vending machines, events, and offices to 'nudge' employees, public away from soda, junk food*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Ambitious new nutrition guidelines in the City of Riverside will help ensure that healthy foods and beverages will be served or sold within city-managed facilities and at publicly-hosted events and programs. Riverside is one of the largest cities in the nation, and the first in Riverside County, to embrace such a policy to fight obesity, type 2 diabetes and chronic disease.

“The City of Riverside is dedicated to making the healthy choice, the easy choice,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “We don’t want to tell people what to eat, but we do want to lead by example. Healthy foods and drinks should always be available when you’re playing with your kids at one of our parks or eating lunch in a city office. Now, thanks to these guidelines, that’s a reality.”

The guidelines, unanimously approved by the Riverside City Council, are scheduled to be fully implemented in January. They specifically apply to the city’s many youth programs, events, meetings, catering occasions, public vending machines and staff vending machines. They will not apply to privately-owned vending machines, workplaces or programs.

“The unanimous passage of these food and beverage guidelines shows that the City prioritizes the health and future of Riverside residents and its city employees” said Kanat Tibet, Director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy’s HEAL Cities Campaign. “Members of the Riverside community can be rightfully proud that their local government is on the cutting edge of this issue.”

Once fully implemented, the standards will introduce at least 50 percent healthy options at events, 100 percent healthy options at city meetings and youth programs, and will determine which products are offered in vending machines according to the following general principles (which are [explained in detail here under the heading “specifications”](#)):

1. **Drinks:** Higher calorie beverages must be no larger than 12 ounces. All juices must contain at least 50 percent juice, with no added sugar and limited to a 12-ounce container. Milk must be 2% fat or less and unsweetened. Water, including carbonated water products, must not have sweeteners.

2. **Snacks:** All snacks must have 200 calories or less, and have less than 35 percent sugar by weight, and less than 35 percent of the calories from fat, and no more than 10 percent of the calories from saturated fat, and 230mg or less of sodium.

3. **Both:** At least one item offered must be low sodium (less than 140mg sodium) and at least one additional item must be high fiber (more than 5g fiber). Vending machine promotional advertisements may only promote items meeting all of these standards.

These comprehensive and well-researched guidelines were first tested in a pilot program located in the Kaiser Permanente [Eastside HEAL Zone](#) in Riverside, which included vending machines at Bobby Bonds Park and Bordwell Park. The program, which followed the California Department of Public Health’s “Rethink Your Drink” program, proved highly successful.

“We’re building on the success of our Eastside HEAL Zone pilot program so that every Riverside employee – and resident – can access delicious and nutritious snacks that don’t pack on the pounds,” City Councilmember Andy Melendrez said. “This is a promising next step towards a healthier city where everyone can live a fulfilling life.”

Four out of ten children in Riverside are overweight and at least ten percent of adults have type 2 diabetes. Experts believe that small behavioral shifts, inspired by environmental “nudges” – like healthier vending machine options – can help reverse these trends.

“Small nudges – like having water and fruit available instead of just soda and cookies – can make a big difference in people’s long-term health,” said Dr. Eddy Jara, the city’s Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention program coordinator. “When you’re given the option to choose something healthy, something fresh, you’re more likely to do the right thing the next time you eat or drink. Over time, you feel better and you live longer.”

The City of Riverside’s [Healthier Food and Beverage Guidelines and Goals](#) were co-sponsored by Mayor Bailey and Councilmember Melendrez. The guidelines are supported by the Riverside Community Health Foundation, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, the HEAL Cities Campaign and Kaiser Permanente.